

**Standard 5-5:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the social, economic, and political events that influenced the United States during the Cold War era.

**5.5.3** Explain the advancement of the civil rights movement in the United States, including key events and people: desegregation of the armed forces, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X. (P, G, H)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand/ Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In Kindergarten, students were introduced to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the national holiday that celebrates his birth (K-3.2, K-3.3).

In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, students learned about Dr. King's contributions to American democracy (1-4.3).

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students will summarize the key events and effects of the civil rights movement in South Carolina, including the desegregation of schools (*Briggs v. Elliott*) and other public facilities and the acceptance of African Americans' right to vote (3-5.6).

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students will compare features of nationalist and independence movements in different regions in the post–World War II period, including Mohandas Gandhi's role in the nonviolence movement for India's independence and the emergence of nationalist movements in African and Asian countries (7 6.4).

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students will explain the factors that influenced the economic opportunities of African American South Carolinians during the latter twentieth century, including racial discrimination, the *Briggs v. Elliott* case, the integration of public facilities and the civil rights movement, agricultural decline, and statewide educational improvement (8-7.4).

In United States History, students will explain the movements for racial and gender equity and civil liberties, including their initial strategies, landmark court cases and legislation, the roles of key civil rights advocates, and the influence of the civil rights movement on other groups seeking ethnic and gender equity (USHC-9.5).

**It is essential for students to know:**

The **progression of the civil rights movement in the United States** began with abolition and emancipation, continued throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and continues today. Earlier in the year, students should have learned about the constitutional amendments that abolished slavery as well as the various struggles faced by African Americans in the years between the Civil War and World War II. As a reminder, many Jim Crow policies came into being following the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court case of 1896 which established the doctrine of “separate-but-equal.” Although the “separate” portion of the doctrine was followed, evidence of the “equal” side rarely materialized. Since that time, many Americans had pressed for continued improvement in the area of civil rights with limited success, including Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, Ida B. Wells Barnett and Marcus Garvey.

World War II changed the landscape for civil rights in America. The contribution of African Americans to the war effort helped to bring about the desegregation of the United States military. Although African Americans fought in segregated units during the war, many died for their country just as white soldiers did. However, African Americans returned from war to a country racially divided. Upon the war's conclusion, African Americans faced many instances of prejudice and discrimination. President Harry S

Truman, in his role as Commander-in-Chief of the military, ordered the desegregation of the army [1948]. However, he could not order the end to all discrimination.

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court declared the practice of school segregation unconstitutional in its landmark ***Brown v. Board of Education*** decision. According to the Supreme Court, the schools were to be integrated “with all deliberate speed.” With “deliberate speed” open for interpretation, the process of integrating the public schools was in fact deliberate but far from speedy. Students should be able to explain how over the course of the next 14 years, from the ***Brown*** decision until the assassination of **Martin Luther King, Jr.** in 1968, the civil rights movement gained momentum.

The civil rights movement saw several leaders, including **King, Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X**, who utilized a variety of strategies to bring attention to the struggle of African Americans to achieve equal rights. Students should already have an understanding of **Dr. King**. They should be able to describe the nonviolent philosophy of **Dr. King** and others who protested many injustices through marches and boycotts. Included in this discussion of civil rights activities should be the roles of **Rosa Parks** and the Montgomery Women’s Association in the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, the sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, and the Freedom Rides. These activities educated and gained sympathy from many Americans, including President Kennedy, because the medium of television brought the abuses of Jim Crow into living rooms across the country. Kennedy proposed a civil rights bill to Congress. Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, several laws were passed by Congress banning segregation in public places and protecting the right of all Americans to vote during the mid-1960s. **Malcolm X** believed that change was not happening quickly enough. He did not believe that white Americans would ever support equal rights for African Americans and encouraged his followers to rely on themselves as opposed to newly passed civil rights laws. Later **Malcolm X** believed that true equality would not be fully achieved without white citizens working together with African Americans. Both Malcolm X and Dr. King were assassinated during the last half of the 1960s.

**It is not essential for students to know:**

Students do not need to remember the date of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954). Students do not need to remember the dates and details about civil rights events such as the lunch counter sit-ins, the Birmingham campaign or the Selma March. Although the substance of these laws is required, students are not required to recall the names and dates of the various pieces of civil rights legislation passed by Congress (Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965). It is not necessary for students to recall the dates or locations of the assassinations of Dr. King or Malcolm X.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments require students to **summarize** the advancement of the civil rights movement in the United States. Assessments should require students to **explain** the causes and effects of the various events such as the desegregation of the armed forces, the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, as well as the influence of Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X. Appropriate assessments should also require students to **compare** the various philosophies held by each key figure and how their beliefs shaped the manner in which they participated in the civil rights movement.